

University of Toronto

JGE321H1: Multicultural Perspectives on Environmental Issues
Winter 2016



Time: Thursdays 10 AM-12 PM
Location: SS 2125

Instructor: Christian Abizaid
Office: Sidney Smith Hall, 5055
Office hours: Thursdays 12:15-2:15 PM,
or by appointment
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Prerequisite: ENV221H1/ENV222H1/GGR222H1/GGR223H

Exclusion: ENV321Y1

Course description

Deforestation, desertification, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, climate change and other environmental problems have reached global dimensions and are believed to put humans and other living species at risk. And yet, the impacts of such environmental problems are unequally distributed within and across countries, regions, groups, as well as among individuals who understand, experience and interact with their environments in different ways. Critical to the understanding of the environmental challenges we currently face, and to the search for a more sustainable future, is the recognition that environmental issues are complex and are embedded in a variety of local, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts that are connected with global networks of exchange, extraction and power. The course uses concepts and ideas from various disciplines, such as anthropology, economics, geography and sociology, as well as from some interdisciplinary fields to shed light on these issues. It draws on case studies from multicultural rural settings in Latin America, Africa and Asia, to illustrate the challenges that people face when interacting with the environment and the politics that surround them in a variety of contexts in the Global South. The course draws first from the perspectives of sustainable livelihoods, cultural ecology and historical ecology to examine some of the ways in which different human groups make a living from the land and natural resources, as well as their role in shaping the environment. Next, we delve into the concept of traditional ecological knowledge and its role in resource management. The course then explores how people interact and societies organize to address environmental issues through the concepts of social capital and collective action. Concepts from political ecology and political geography help to identify the political dimensions of environmental issues and to examine environmental injustices within and among societies. In the final part of the course, we use the concepts of civil society and social and environmental movements to begin exploring some possibilities for a more just and sustainable future, and conclude by drawing on particular cases that offer hope and inspiration. The course consists primarily of lectures, complemented by slides, some videos, and in-class discussions. Guest speakers may also be invited.

Evaluation

- **Reading responses (2 responses x 15% each = 30%).** Students must submit 2 reading responses during the term. The first response is to the readings for January 26 and is mandatory for all students (due January 27); students must select one of the two suggested possibilities (see below) and prepare a second response to the readings for that week. Responses should be 2-3 pages, 1.5-spaced, 12 point font size. More detailed guidelines will be provided in class.

	Material covered		Submission deadline
Response # 1:	week 4 (Jan. 26)	→	due Jan 27 (required for all students)
Response # 2: (Select <u>one</u> of the following options)			
Option A:	week 8 (Mar. 2)	→	due Mar. 3
Option B:	week 9 (Mar. 9)	→	due Mar. 10

- **Final essay (20%; due March 31) (~2000 words).** Students will prepare a short essay in which they apply concepts, ideas and examples discussed in this course, to make an argument on an environmental issue in the Global South based on a real-life case study discussed in an article provided by the instructor. List of case-studies and detailed guidelines will be provided later in the term
- **Participation and in-class activities (10%; ongoing).** Participation includes playing an active role in class, by asking questions, making comments on lectures, participating in class and small-group discussions. It also includes quizzes related to assigned readings. As a way to provide a wider range of options to engage with course materials, students are also welcome to submit questions and brief informal comments related to readings and class discussion of the week. Electronic questions and comments should be submitted via email, preferably the day before class and up to the end of the day (i.e., 5:00 PM) on Friday (i.e. a day after such materials were discussed in class). Please note that it is easier to incorporate questions if sent in advance.
- **Final exam (40%; during official final exam period)**

Total = 100%

Readings

There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be assigned from journal articles, book chapters and other sources to cover the topics discussed in class each week. Whenever possible, reading materials will be made available electronically through BLACKBOARD (as links to the U of T Library). Alternative arrangements will be made for other readings.

Proposed lecture schedule*

	Topic	Reminders & notes
Week 1 (Jan. 5):	Introduction	
Week 2 (Jan. 12):	Cultural ecology and sustainable livelihoods: Making a living in the Amazon floodplain	Discussion of reading response assignments
Week 3 (Jan. 19):	Transforming the landscape, a historical ecology perspective	
Week 4 (Jan. 26):	Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)	Response # 1 due (Jan. 27)
Week 5 (Feb. 2):	How do people address environmental issues: Community-based resource management	
Week 6 (Feb. 9)	Politics and the environment: access	
Week 7 (Feb. 16)	Politics and the environment: Discourses about people and environment	Discussion of final essay

(Feb. 23)	Reading week	No class
Week 8 (Mar. 2):	Politics and the environment: Gender	Response # 2, option A due (March 3)
Week 9 (Mar. 9):	Politics and the environment: The effects of globalization	Response # 2, option B due (Mar. 10)
Week 10 (Mar. 16):	Civil society and social movements	
Week 11 (Mar. 23):	In search for hope and inspiration	
Week 12 (Mar. 30):	Course wrap-up	Final essay due (Mar. 31)

* NOTES: Modifications may apply as the term progresses; students will be notified in advance, should any changes be made.

COURSE POLICIES AND STUDENT RESPONSABILITIES

Lectures and classroom policies

- Punctuality: Class will start on time (i.e., 10:10 AM). If you have to come into class late, please do so in the least disruptive manner possible. **As a sign of respect to the instructor and the rest of the class, arrivals after 10:30 AM are discouraged, as are early departures.**
- Class preparation and student participation: Although attendance is not formally part of the evaluation for the course, students are expected to do the assigned readings in advance and be prepared to participate in class discussions and in-class activities. I want this class to foster an environment that encourages student participation and questions. Please note that participation does count towards your grade.
- Course manners: You are expected to handle yourselves with respect toward the instructor, teaching assistant, and your peers in all matters related to the course, including participation in class, in-class activities, communications regarding course content or evaluation, etc.
- Etiquette regarding the use of computers and other electronic devices: The use of computers and other electronic devices in class should be limited to activities related to the course. Please turn cell phones off during class—phones ringing, earphones and texting are disruptive and unacceptable.
- Course notes: As a courtesy, I will be posting my powerpoint slides on BLACKBOARD **after** class. Please note that I am under no obligation to do so and that such notes are intended to assist you and not replace your personal notes.
- Copyright issues: Lectures and course materials are considered intellectual property and are covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record a lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask explicitly for my permission. If granted, such permission is only for such student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" them online or in any other way. Please refer to the "Rules and Regulations" section of the printed version of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Calendar for further details on UofT Copyright issues.

Written assignments

- Formatting: Coursework must be word processed 1.5-spaced, 12 point font size, unless otherwise noted. Assignments should be proofread prior to submission to insure that they are free of grammatical and spelling errors and must include a list of all references cited in the text, using the APA citation style (see "UofT Libraries Research" link in the resources section below). All coursework should include the student's name and student number, the course's code and name and that of the instructor in order to avoid loss or improper identification. Note, however, that there is no need to use cover page to do so.

- **Green course:** This course has been recognized as a green course by the Sustainability Office. Green courses are intended to reduce paper use. As such, assignments must be submitted electronically (see submission guidelines below). Students are also encouraged to conserve paper by limiting their printing of course materials whenever possible. To learn how to print double-sided see: <http://utbeat.biology.utoronto.ca/doublesiding.html> , or <http://www.printdoublesided.sa.utoronto.ca/Instructions%20-%201st%20page.htm>).
- **Submission guidelines:** All assignments must be submitted electronically through BLACKBOARD **by 11:59 PM** on the date specified by the instructor. It is recommended that you keep copies of your assignments and early drafts until you receive your graded assignment. Please submit your assignments in a DOC, DOCX or Word-compatible file format. Please do **NOT** submit your assignment as a PDF file.
- **Late submissions:** Work submitted late will be accepted with a **5% daily penalty (including weekend days), up to seven days** after the due date. If needed, you may submit your assignment during the weekend as a way to minimize late penalties. In such cases, the date/time of submission will be considered, using 11:59 PM as time of reference. In case of an outstanding **valid** situation you must contact me, preferably in advance. I cannot consider a particular situation unless I know about it, so do not wait until the end of the term to communicate with me if something did come up. For health reasons, a completed University of Toronto Verification of Student Illness or Injury form must be submitted (<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/>); other proof may be required by the instructor for non-medical reasons (see general guidelines and form put together by FAS available at: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/petitions/process#documentation>). The required form must be submitted within a week of the missed deadline. No extensions will be granted unless you have communicated with the instructor and your reasons have been deemed valid.
- **The primary criteria used in evaluating written work are the following:**
 - 1) **Mechanics:** Your work must be completely free of grammatical errors, spelling errors or major factual errors. References can be in any style but the same format must be used consistently and they must be accurate.
 - 2) **Writing style:** Your papers should be written in a clear and unambiguous style which assists, rather than impedes, communication with the reader.
 - 3) **Structure:** Your written work should have a clear focus, provided by the research question, and a structure which logically flows from that focus.
 - 4) **Precision and accuracy:** Precision means saying exactly and specifically what you mean, avoiding ambiguity and vague generalities. Accuracy refers to absence of major factual errors.
 - 5) **Analysis:** Your analysis should display understanding of the topic and, based on that understanding, originality of thought.

Communication with the instructor

My preference is to meet with you in person. My designated office hours is a block of time in which I am available to discuss with you course-related matters (for the hours, see the first page of the syllabus). It is time set aside for you-- take advantage of it! Appointments may also be set for students who cannot come during scheduled office hours. For urgent matters or simple questions, you may also contact me via email, but **the rule of thumb is that email should not be a substitute for office hours**. Depending on the situation/issue, I may ask you to come to office hours or set up a meeting in person. Please note that I am not online 24/7 and thus may not be able to respond to your messages right away. I will make an effort to respond to you within 48 hours, but it will take longer during weekends as I remain offline to spend time with my family. Please make sure to use your University of Toronto email account (i.e. @mail.utoronto.ca) and to include the course

code "JGE321" and your name in the title box of your email for easier handling. Other e-mail addresses may be filtered as spam and thus I may be unable to respond to them.

BLACKBOARD

A BLACKBOARD has been set for this course. PowerPoint slides, additional readings, assignments and other useful materials will be posted on it. As mentioned earlier, assignments must be submitted through BLACKBOARD. BLACKBOARD will also be used by the instructor to communicate with the class. Please make sure to check it regularly.

Accessibility needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>. You may also want to contact Accessibility Services Office if you have problems arising from chronic issues or injuries sustained during the term that affect your ability to write tests or complete course work.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves. Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
- Making up sources or facts
- Including references to sources that you did not use
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing"
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone
- Looking at someone else's answers, or letting someone else look at yours
- Misrepresenting your identity
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University (including doctor's notes), institutional documents, or grades.

Please note that potential offences will be addressed in accordance with institutional procedures.

Useful UofT Resources

UofT Libraries

- Library Catalogue (search for books, journal articles and documents):
<http://search1.library.utoronto.ca/UTL/search.jsp>
- Research services for students (e.g., research guides, citation resources, refworks, etc.):
<https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/research>

UofT Writing (for advice on: planning and organizing, reading and researching, using sources, types of writing, style and editing and English as a second language): <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>